

Green light for new country house

A Suffolk planning committee last week defied the advice of its own officers to unreservedly approve a new country house by Paul + O Architects.

The decision, described as 'very brave' by the practice's director Paul Acland, flies in the face of government plans to drop the country house clause.

Wilderness House in Darsham will be the first new country house in the Suffolk Coastal district and could well be the last in the country, if the government proceeds with its plans to drop the clause.

The 'uncompromisingly Modern' building, approved by a seven-to-one majority, was also backed by local figures John Gummer MP and Sir Michael Hopkins. Gummer, in a letter of support to the client, said it was 'precisely the kind of home we

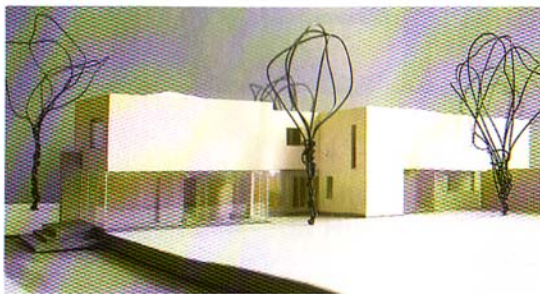
had in mind when providing for continuation of the great British tradition of the country house'.

And Hopkins wrote: 'If we are to continue to develop the tradition of the country house, reflecting the aspirations of our time, which I believe we must, then your house should be built – it promises to be a good one.'

CABE, the Suffolk Preservation Society and the Suffolk Society of Architects also gave it a ringing endorsement.

'They've really gone out on a limb,' said Acland, who was delighted the committee had passed the scheme despite the proposed exclusion of the country house clause from the revised countryside guidance, currently out to consultation.

Councillor Marian Andrews told the AJ the house was good



The 'uncompromisingly Modern' building planned by Paul + O Architects

news for Suffolk. 'We thought it was an innovative design reflecting good architecture of the 21st century. I felt we should be bold and go for it,' she said.

And Councillor Winter Rose added: 'I really believe that in these exceptional cases we should build houses in the countryside if they have a major contribution to make.'

Zoë Blackler

ppg7
save the clause

Show your support for the AJ's campaign to save the country house clause. Lobby your MP to support our Early Day Motion and pressure planning minister Keith Hill to keep the clause within the government's revised countryside guidance, PPS 7. Visit our website for draft letters and background on the campaign. +